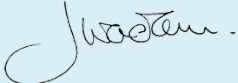


# Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

“We aim for all our children to develop a love of learning that will last them a lifetime, caring for and respecting the world around them, valuing differences and broadening moral values”

*The Solent Schools, Vision, Values and Aims*

<b>Responsibility for policy review</b>	Local Governing Body
<b>Date reviewed</b>	5 April 2022
<b>Review cycle</b>	Three years. Next review Spring 2025
<b>Linked Policies</b>	Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>5 April 2022</b>
 Chair of Governors	Date





## **Introduction**

The governing body of The Solent Schools is committed to providing the very best quality of education for all its pupils, based upon equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of looked after children when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in 'Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' (DfE 2018) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

### **Who are Looked After Children?**

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' - LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

LAC reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However, Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for LAC until they are 16 years old.





Looked after children can be extremely vulnerable pupils in terms of education and future life-chances. The local governing body of The Solent Schools is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:

- a designated teacher for looked after children (The Head of School);
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all looked after children;
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children;
- effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group; and
- strong effective communication with outside agencies and experts.

### **Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher**

The designated teacher will:

- be an advocate for looked after children;
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a PEP is completed as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the designated teacher);
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive;



- encourage looked after children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded; and
- ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the Local Authority (LA).

## **Roles and Responsibilities of all Staff**

- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the designated teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after children; and
- positively promote the self-esteem of looked after children.

## **Role and Responsibility of the Local Governing Body**

The local governing body of The Solent Schools will:

- ensure all local governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for looked after children;
- be aware of whether the school has looked after children and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named designated teacher for looked after children;
- liaise with the Head of School to ensure that the designated teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to looked after children;
- support the Head of School, Executive Headteacher, designated teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of looked after children are met;



- nominate a governor who links with the designated teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (these reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons); and
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

## **Confidentiality**

Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a “need to know basis”. The designated teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality will be maintained.

## **Training**

The Executive Headteacher or the designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

## **Personal Education Plan (PEP) Completion**

- Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school).
- Date is set for the completion of a PEP.
- A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data.
- PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker, designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
- A date is set for the next PEP meeting.
- PEP is taken to the child’s statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child’s life.
- PEP sent by the designated teacher or lead professional to the LAC team.

For further information, please also see:

- [The Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>
- [Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools – Guidance for Schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-attainment-of-looked-after-children-in-primary-schools-guidance-for-schools)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-attainment-of-looked-after-children-in-primary-schools-guidance-for-schools>

